



*Teatru
Manoel*

1732



On the occasion of the
MALTA INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 1986
The Hon. ALEX SCEBERRAS TRIGONA,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Culture
and
**THE MANOEL THEATRE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
present

“TOSCA”

(in concert version)

by the
MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA AND CHOIR

with the participation of

SOLOISTS:

Soprano: _____ *Lorenza Canepa*
Tenor: _____ *Gianni Mastino*
Baritone: _____ *Silvestro Sammaritano*
Bass: _____ *Joe Vella Bondin*

on **FRIDAY, 1st AUGUST 1986** at 8.30 p.m.
at **ST. PAUL'S SQUARE, MDINA**

Antonio Manoel De Vilhena

Grand Master *Antonio Manoel de Vilhena*, a Portuguese, was elected Grand Master in 1722. A man of great intellectual qualities, he was popular with all, and his "savoir faire" earned him everyone's love.

At the beginning of his reign, fearing a second Turkish invasion of Malta, he promptly took steps against such an eventuality, and the enemy, seeing his preparedness, sailed away without even attempting a landing.

Having fortified the Island, he began to find ways and means of encouraging civil enterprise, and in the political field he managed to negotiate a treaty of peace with the Sultan of Constantinople.

As a befitting gesture towards the People of Malta, he built in 1732 the Manoel Theatre which is a living monument to his achievements. It keeps his memory fresh and glorious in all those who cultivate the Arts and all those who seek an honest recreation, as is implied by the Theatre's motto: "*Ad honestatem populi oblectationem*".



THE MANOEL THEATRE FOYER

The Bonici Palace on the corner of Old Bakery Street, acquired by the Manoel Theatre two decades ago, has been completely restored and now constitutes its foyer. It can be approached from the auditorium, the level of your box, or from the original courtyard. Climbing the staircase with its shallow steps of white Carrara marble you see at every turn shell-shaped niches in one of which you may find the bust of your favourite composer. Further up, double doors inset with bevelled-edged mirrors lead to impeccable cloakrooms.

There are wall brackets and chandeliers from Vienna, heavy silk curtains in bluey/green and gold, a pair of candelabra once the property of the Messina family.

You will see engravings characters and scenes from famous operas and showcases in which are to be found memorabilia of the Theatre collected throughout the years. An antique mirror hangs above the eighteenth century mantelpiece. Beautiful furniture has been collected from the Auberges and carefully restored. The ceiling is a particular delight, the newly hand-painted beams, so near in colour to the curtains, are decorated with the Maltese Cross and small crowns picked out in gold.

Keeping guard over all this splendour stands the bust of Grand Master Antonio Manuel de Vilhena which was recovered from Manoel Island.

A visit to the Manoel Theatre Foyer is a must for every art lover, this splendid old house, restored to its pristine glory, makes a marvellous venue for any art Exhibition. The setting and acoustics are perfect for recitals and poetry reading.

MDINA — ANCIENT CAPITAL OF MALTA

MDINA IS THE ANCIENT CAPITAL CITY of Malta, its origins lost in antiquity though it is known for certain that it was inhabited even in prehistoric times. To the Greeks and the Romans it was known as the principal town of the Island and was in all probability the oppidum — the fortified city — described by Cicero. It certainly occupied the most advantageous site for the island's main citadel, as it lies almost equidistant from the large shallow bays to the north-west and south-east, and from the natural harbours to the north. The hill on which it was built gave it a natural defensive position and its walls, rising sheer from the ridge, gain additional height from the base of the escarpment below.

In Roman times its walls extended over a much longer perimeter than they do today, for Mdina was reduced to its present size, for defence purposes, by the Arabs after 870 AD. The ditch which today defines Mdina's boundary was dug by the Arabs; the rest of the city's boundaries are delineated by fortifications which follow the contours of the Mdina hill itself. Some of the existing walls date from the Middle Ages but extensive modifications and additions to Mdina's fortifications were carried out during the period of the Knights of St. John in Malta.

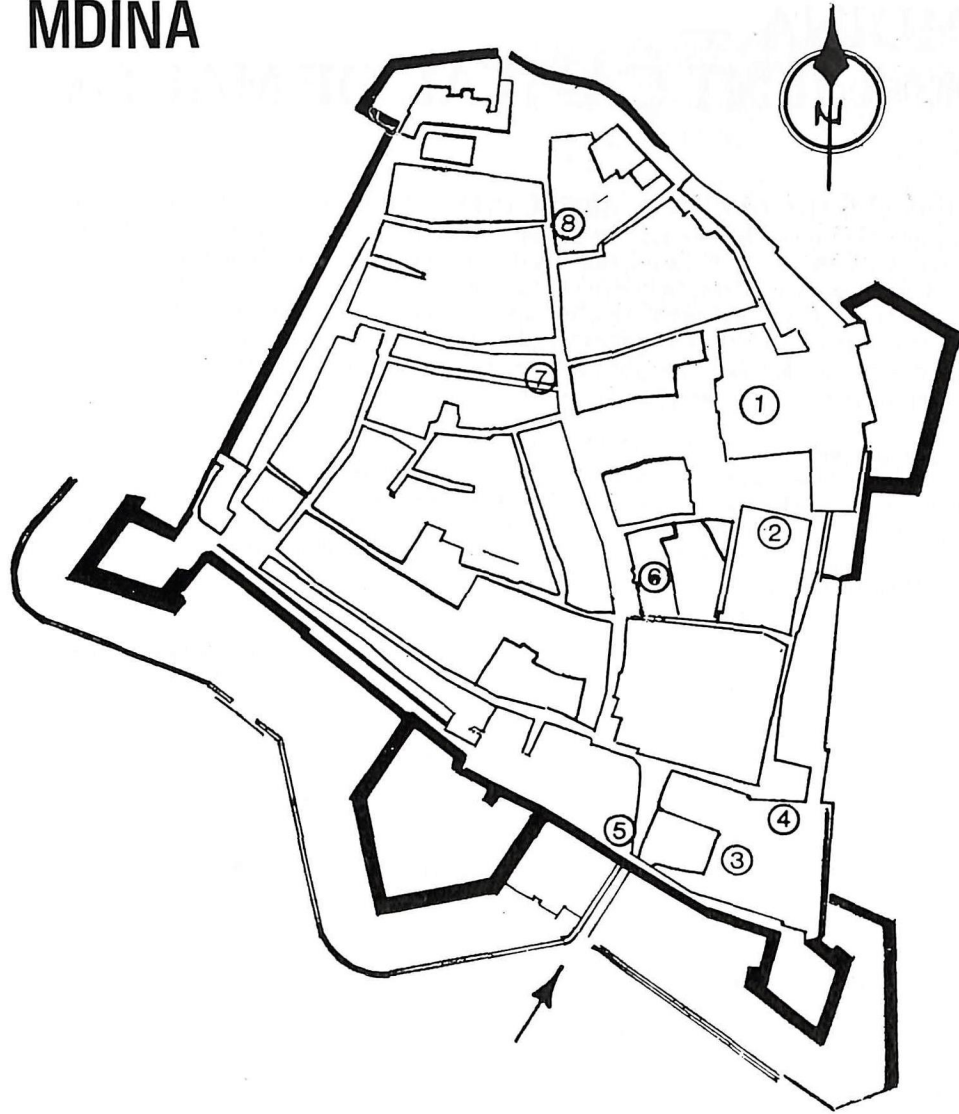
The street plan of Mdina is most interesting and dates from early medieval times. Most of the present buildings were constructed during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries but earlier buildings can be seen.

1. **THE CATHEDRAL.** The present Cathedral stands on a site hallowed by time and tradition. According to that tradition the first Christian church in Malta was built on the site of the house where Publius, 'the chief man of the island', lived and was converted to Christianity by St Paul. One of the first acts of Roger the Norman after his landing in Malta in 1090 was to reconstruct, on the same site, a new cathedral. The eminent Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà (1639-1710) was responsible for the present building, which is one of the best examples of Baroque art in Malta.

2. **THE CATHEDRAL MUSEUM.** In a charming little square on the left of the Cathedral is a magnificent building erected in 1733 as a seminary. The facade presents a distinct departure from the previously static Maltese Baroque; the centrepiece, with its open stone balcony supported by Atlantes, and the concave recess above are particularly interesting. Today this building houses the Cathedral Museum and contains paintings, silverware and sculpture of high artistic value, as well as an extensive Dürer collection and other valuable items. It is also the repository of the Cathedral Archives and of the Inquisition records.

3. **VILHENA PALACE.** One of the greater patrons of the arts among the Grandmasters, Manoel de Vilhena constructed this palace for his own use in 1730. Built on three floors around three sides of a courtyard, it is screened from the street by a high wall with a fine gateway. The timber gate itself is of first class workmanship and a very

MDINA



LEGEND

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|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cathedral | 5. Tower of The Standard |
| 2. Cathedral Museum | 6. Palazzo Testaferrata |
| 3. Vilhena Palace | 7. Palazzo Santa Sofia |
| 4. Old Courts of Law | 8. The Norman House |

good example of the local craft of the early eighteenth century. The courtyard is of the cloister type with open arcading, the arches becoming flatter as one proceeds upward. The main door is one of the finest in Malta.

4. **OLD COURTS OF LAW.** Known also as the Corte Capitanale, this building formed part of the Municipium, or seat of the Municipality of Mdina, which had control over most of the internal affairs of the commune. In one of the halls of the upper floor can be seen the coat-of-arms of what was known as the Captain of the Rod, who presided over the Courts of Law. The facade is a mixture of styles and is undoubtedly the work of different architects of different periods.

5. **TOWER OF THE STANDARD.** This is the first building on the left as one enters the city of Mdina. It was built by Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena during the reconstruction of the fortifications and was the main City Gatehouse. As the name implies, it flew the Standard of the Order. It replaced a much older tower which, along with the Cathedral bell tower, was visible from most of the coastal towers.

6. **TESTAFERRATA PALACE.** This is a magnificent building and a very important link in the history of the development of palace architecture in the Old City. One of the later palaces to be built, it was the house of the Marquis of St. Vincent Ferreri. Its facade is one of the most restful and elegant in the whole of Mdina.

7. **PALAZZO SANTA SOFIA.** Reputed to be the oldest surviving building in Mdina, a tablet gives the date as 1233, but this almost certainly refers to an earlier building on the same site, as the present palazzo belongs to a later period. The first floor is a recent addition constructed in 1936.

8. **THE NORMAN HOUSE.** One of the best known buildings in Mdina. Although much restored, it still retains its mediaeval character. The string course, a double row of inverted triangles with balls as pendants, is typical of the period, as are the pointed windows, hood moulds and double windows separated by slender circular columns.

Michael Ellul.

The map on page 4 shows the position of the principal features of Mdina as numbered in this article.

GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858 - 1924)



TOSCA, opera in three acts by Puccini, with a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica (based on a play by Sardou). The first performance was in Rome in 1900. Angelotti (an escaped prisoner) hides in a church where Mario Cavaradossi (an artist) is painting. Mario helps him to escape. When Scarpia (the chief of police) arrives on the scene he is suspicious and has Cavaradossi arrested and sent to the torture chamber. Scarpia, who has become attracted by Tosca (Cavaradossi's mistress and a famous singer), promises her her lover's liberty in return for her favours. She finally grants pretended consent to his wishes, but as soon as he has written the orders for a mock execution of Cavaradossi she stabs him with a knife. At dawn she explains to Cavaradossi what has happened and tells him of the arrangements she has made for his escape after the mock execution. When the firing is over she hurries to his body and finds to her horror that he is dead. She realises her murder of Scarpia has been discovered. As a police agent attempts to arrest her she climbs the prison walls and leaps to her death.

* * *

Puccini, Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria (1858 - 1924), Italian opera composer. Of a musical family, he studied in Lucca and at the Milan Conservatorio, where he was a pupil of Ponchielli. He entered his first opera *Le Villi* (1884) for a competition which was won by Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, and had a success with *Manon Lescaut* in 1893. *La Bohème* was first performed with Toscanini conducting in 1896, *Tosca* in 1900, *Madama Butterfly*, which initially was a failure, in 1904. The success of these three was not equalled by *La Fanciulla del West* (*The Girl of the Golden West*), produced in New York in 1910, nor by *Il Trittico*, the triptych of one-act operas (*Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*) on which he worked during the 1914-18 war, although the latter contains some of his best music. The final duet of *Turandot*, left unfinished at his death, was completed by Alfano. Gifted with a vivid sense of the stage and a strong and natural melodic talent, Puccini developed with them an impressive resource in harmony and orchestration which have made his operas among the most successful of the past century, even though he was a more superficial and more limited composer than his predecessor, Verdi. In a nutshell, Verdi was a great dramatic composer, Puccini an expert theatrical one.

THE ORCHESTRA OF THE MANOEL THEATRE

Leader: **George Spiteri**

Sub Leader: **Joseph Galea**

First Violins _____ Ronnie Pisani, Stephen Zammit, Walter Abela, Andrew Borg,
Marcelle Bartolo, George Curmi, Mario Bisazza,
Lawrence Renes-Bonnici

Second Violins _____ Mario Micallef, Maria Piscopo, Marceline Agius,
Tanya Sultana, Doris Alden, Joseph Zammit

Violas _____ Guido Mamo, Miriam Cauchi, Antoine Frendo

V'Cellos _____ Alfred Tonna, Mario Psaila, Ivan Degabriele, Ronnie Sultana

Double Basses _____ Lino Cremona, Spiridione Xuereb, Patrick Xuereb

First Flute _____ Silvio Zammit

Second Flute _____ Laura Falzon

First Oboe _____ Pierre Grech

Second Oboe _____ Estevan Ellul

First Clarinet _____ Joseph Camilleri

Second Clarinet _____ Charles Abela

First Bassoon _____ Archibald Mizzi

Second Bassoon _____ Mario Micallef

First Horn _____ Philip Psaila

Second Horn _____ Alfred Spagnol

Third Horn _____ Emmanuel Spagnol

First Trumpet _____ Joseph Agius

Second Trumpet _____ Henry Attard

First Trombone _____ Michael Ciantar

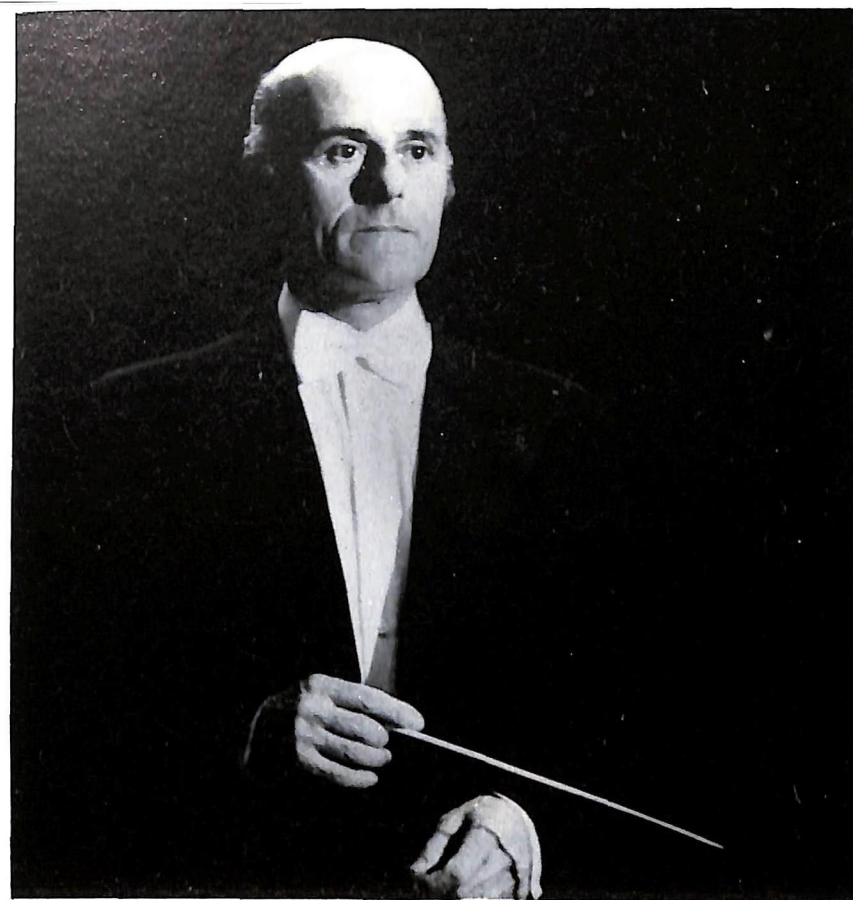
Second Trombone _____ Paul Borg

Third Trombone _____ Joseph Xuereb

Tuba _____ Raymond Sciberras

Timpani _____ John Fenech

Piano _____ Tony Sammut



MRO. JOSEPH SAMMUT

In 1945, after early musical training, Joseph Sammut joined the Commander-in Chief's Orchestra, then in 1952 he was appointed Conductor of this orchestra.

After further study in England, with Clarence Raybould, Sir Malcolm Sargent and other notable musicians, he returned to Malta and gave a concert at the Manoel Theatre in conjunction with the late Sir Arthur Bliss, in which Mro Sammut conducted Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto, with Denis Matthews as soloist.

In 1968 he was appointed Conductor of The Orchestra of the Manoel Theatre - a position that this much respected musician holds to this day.

THE MANOEL THEATRE CHOIR

Choirmaster: Maestro J. Sammut

Piano Accompanist: Mario Fenech

Females

Mary Azzopardi
Lina Bartolo
Doris Baldacchino
Marika Bartolo
Susan Bartolo
Catherine Bonnici
Rose Borg
Josephine Bugeja
Mary Bugeja
Josette M. Camilleri
Joseanne Cini
Rose Ebejer
Sylvia Ebejer
Josephine Falzon
Cynthia Genovese
Emma Meli
Rose Marie Micallef
Maxine Mifsud
Ivonne Mirabatur
Antoinette Portelli
Josephine Portelli
Marthese Psaila
Emmanuela J. Sammut
Mary Zammit

Males

Edward Aquilina
Aldo Attard
Carmel Attard
Vincent Bonello
Raymond Debattista
Cecil Ellul
John R. Gatt
Karmenu Grixti
John Midolo
John Mary Mifsud
John Mula
Anton Muscat
Vincent Parnis
John Portelli
Kevin J. Rapinet
George Saliba
Paul Scerri
Joseph Spiteri



Soprano:

Lorenza Canepa



Tenor:

Gianni Mastino



(Bass)

Joe Vella Bondin



(Baritone)

Silvestro Sammaritano

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